A CENTURY

IN THE LIFE OF

FLAT BRANCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Organized October 3, 1873

By

Stedman Black Bryan

Pastor

The Reverend David W. Schulherr

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DEDICATION
TO
MISS IDA SHAW

That individual who has carefully maintained an excellent record throughout the years for the Women of the Church.

GIFT OF GARY F. BAREFOOT

NCC
NcU

CHURCH DIRECTORY

David W. Schulherr, Minister
Mrs. Lowell Smith, Organist
Billy Wilder, Treasurer

THE SESSION:
The Reverend David W. Schulherr, Moderator
Ishmael McDonald, Clerk
Floyd Autry
Edwin Bain
John Daskall
Angus Shaw
John Duncan Shaw
Billy Wilder

THE DIACONATE:
Fred McArtan, Chairman
Charles Bain
Roger Bain
Ken Black
Alvin McArtan
James McArtan
Hector McNeill
Bill Shaw
Tommy Shaw
Charlie Smith

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:
Ishmael McDonald, Superintendent
Mrs. Roger Bain, Secretary
Mrs. Angus Shaw, Assistant Secretary
Billy Wilder, Treasurer

TEACHERS:
Ishmael McDonald, Adults
John Daskall, Seniors
Mrs. Charlie Smith, Pioneers
Mrs. Edgar S. Smith, Primary
Miss Annie Shaw, Beginners
Mrs. Dwight Shaw, Nursery
Mrs. Charles Shaw Smith, Nursery
Mrs. Bobby Wilson, Nursery

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

OFFICERS:
Mrs. Charlie Smith, President
Miss Annie Shaw, Vice President
Mrs. Charles Shaw Smith, Secretary
Mrs. Allen Baldwin, Treasurer
Miss Ida Shaw, Historian

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:
Mrs. John Daskall, Personal Faith and Family Life
Mrs. Euna Butler, Eucumenical Missions and Relations
Mrs. Angus Shaw, Christian Community Action
Mrs. Bobby Wilson, Leadership and Resources

CIRCLE CHAIRMEN:
1. Mrs. Hazel Clark
2. Mrs. Floyd Autry
3. Mrs. Edgar S. Smith

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

Bobby Kennedy, Director

SENIORS:
John Daskall
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Shaw Smith

JUNIORS:
Mrs. Robert Butler
Mrs. John Daskall
Mrs. Alvin McArtan
Mrs. Bobby Wilson

JUNIOR CHOIR DIRECTORS:
Mrs. John Daskall
Mrs. Alvin McArtan

INTRODUCTION

Let me invite you into a meditation some afternoon just as the sun is setting. Go with me into our beautiful sanctuary and sit and watch the fading light of day being put to rest and, as that light filters through the stained glass windows, you cannot help but realize that you are not alone in that beautiful place. For, first of all, you will be overwhelmed by the proximity of God. From the cross above the table to the very back seat. God and His love is evident everywhere. But others are there for God and His love has touched lives long before we were born and caused their corresponding love for Him to take shape and evolve from a little log school house into this magnificient House of God.

This is the story we have to tell you of how God took a small group of hearty Scots who never learned the English colloquialism "cant" and built a Church on a hill whose lights have been a living witness to the fact that Jesus is the Light of the World and they called it Flat Branch.

We will remember a name or two and tell you something of their contributions. As memory serves me and the stories I have heard are recounted, many names and many events will be omitted not because of their unimportance, but because of our ignorance.

100 YEARS OF SERVICE

The beginnings: Alexander Morrison. an Elder in Tirza Church, which is now known as Summerville Church, saw a need and did something about that need. He knew the old log school house sat astride the hill up above the Flat Branch and there was a goodly spring for drinking water on hot days so Mr. Morrison set out to organize a Sunday School. He did just that and became the leader of the new group and nurtured it through its first years of life. As the Sunday School grew, Mr. Morrison grew concerned for the future growth in Christ of the members. He shared his concerns with his pastor, The Reverend Dr. Neil McKay. Dr. McKay, like Mr. Morrison, was a doer. So, when he went to the spring meeting of Fayetteville Presbytery he was carrying a petition praying for the organization of a Church at Flat Branch. When Dr. McKay returned, instead of a petition, he had a commission to organize a Church and install officers. The commission was composed of Dr. H. G. Hill, Dr. Neil McKay and Ruling Elder J. P. Hodges.

This commission was dilligent in its work for on October 3, 1873, the organization was completed with the preaching of a sermon by Dr. H. G. Hill and its first Session meeting at that time 23 members were received. They were received by the transfer of their letters with 10 coming from Barbeque Church, 8 from China Grove Church and 5 from Tirza Church. This new Church then elected their first Session composed of Daniel Morrison and Allen Shaw. The Deacons elected were Angus Shaw and John M. Morrison.

The Session called as first pastor The Reverend James McQueen as stated supply. Times were hard and money was hard to come by so the people gave what they had of provisions of food and a whole lot of love. He served in this manner until March, 1876.

Dr. Neil McKay offered his services to the Church without any remuneration. The Session accepted this offer and Dr. McKay served until his retirement in 1890. Whereupon the Session called a congregational meeting on the first Saturday in March, 1890 for the purpose of calling a minister. The congregation met and called The Reverend D. D. McBryde agreeing to pay him $200.00 for ¼ of his time. The Reverend McBryde served the church until his death, October 20, 1896.

Again we see Dr. Neil McKay looking after his beloved Scottish Parish. He had been to Presbytery and had met a young Scottish preacher that he felt would

serve well at Flat Branch and so he contacted the Elders and they promptly called The Reverend James Stedman Black. Mr. Black served the church until his resignation in 1905 when he accepted a call from the Church in Newport, Tennessee.

With the resignation of Mr. Black, an era in the life of Flat Branch was brought to a close for he was the last of the Gaelic preachers a tongue beloved by the Scots. There were other Scottish preachers but none who knew the Gaelic tongue. Yet, even today, the descendants of those hardy Scots still know and love the language. Notable among these is Malcolm Shaw, a Deacon in Flat Branch, who recites in a beautiful way the lovely 23rd Psalm.

The Reverend L. A. McLaurin followed Mr. Black and filled the pulpit for 2 years. Mr. McLaurin was also the organizing pastor of the Lillington Presbyterian Church.

The year of 1910 saw the beginning of an unusual pastorate under the leadership of The Reverend C. L. Bragaw. Mr. Bragaw was a mid-westerner far different from his forerunners in the pulpit. He brought new ideas and new programs some of which were offensive to the Scottish people of Flat Branch and Lillington.

Then, in rapid succession, Flat Branch had several ministers to serve as stated supply. The first, The Reverend T. Pace; then, The Reverend A. T. Lasater; and The Reverend G. F. Kirkpatrick.

In 1920 the beloved Reverend C. M. Gibbs came to minister to the good folk at Flat Branch. He remained until 1927. During Mr. Gibbs' pastorate a manse was built at Flat Branch. His successor, The Reverend F. M. Bain, was the first resident pastor. Mr. Bain remained here for one year. During this year a program for the young people was begun.

In 1928 and 1929 the church was served by The Reverend W. P. Gibbs.

In 1930, The Reverend Eugene Alexander became the pastor. In the interim period of 1927 Ira S. Hager, a student at Union Theological Seminary, came as a supply. During this summer the two class rooms on either side of the church were built. In 1941, after the resignation of Mr. Alexander in order to enter the chaplaincy of the U. S. Army, Mr. E. D. McMahan came as stated supply. He remained until 1943.

In September of 1943, the Reverend Ira E. Hagar came back to us as our pastor and he remained as our pastor until 1952 when he resigned to become full-time pastor of the Spring Lake Church.

He was followed by The Reverend Leslie Bullock, Professor of Bible at Flora McDonald College in Red Springs. He, along with other ministers sent by Fayetteville Presbytery, kept the pulpit occupied until January, 1955 when The Reverend C. H. Maury became stated supply and the first full-time minister to preach at Flat Branch. He continued in this capacity until March 1957 after which he served as part-time minister for six additional months.

In November of 1957, The Reverend Frank C. Wilkerson became the pastor. The following year the Men of the Church organization was consumated. Mr. Wilkerson remained pastor until January 12, 1964. It was under his leadership that plans were made for the present "Kirk on the Hill."

The Church's next pastor, The Reverend Roy G. Taylor who came June 6, 1965, was also the pastor of the Bunnlevel Church. The new pastor was to preach at Flat Branch on the first and third Sundays and to continue to live in the Bunnlevel manse. Under the leadership of Mr. Taylor the youth work, which was combined with Bunnlevel, had a great revival. Mr. Taylor resigned effective January 28, 1967.

In June of 1967, The Reverend Stedman Black Bryan came to the parish composed of Flat Branch and Bunnlevel. During the first month of the ministry the Session gave its approval for a Vesper Service every second and fourth Sunday evening. This enabled the church to have a worship service each Sunday. The young people were continued as they were under the leadership of Mr. Taylor. The young people on Halloween went "trick or treat" for jam and jelly. The response was great and when these goodies were taken to Barium Sorings there was jubiliation everywhere. The young people felt closer to the folks at Barium Springs after having visited there.

The choir assisted the Session in a great way in providing services at Mason's Rest Home. Particularly enjoyed were the Communion Services held there quarterly.

Mr. Bryan brought another service to Flat Branch - the Christmas Eve Communion. This lovely service lends itself so beautifully to the beautiful simplicity of the sanctuary of Flat Branch.

During this pastorate Mr. David Sullins Stentz, Jr., of Fayetteville became Minister of Music. Mr. Stentz's influence still lives on in the church.

Mr. Bryan's health was steadily declining so that in February, 1971, his physician demanded his retirement.

In September of 1971, the church was still without a pastor. In order to help pay off the indebtedness, Mr. Bryan offered his services without remuneration. Mr. Bryan served an additional three months.

In June of 1972, The Reverend David W. Schulherr came as our pastor. At his suggestion, the Session called for a staggered hour of worship service in order that a morning service could be held in Flat Branch and Bunnlevel each Sunday. As we bring this narrative to a close, Mr. Schulherr is still our pastor and the Body of our Christ still marches forward to that day when the Kingdom is truly come.

THE HOUSES OF WORSHIP

The first church was constructed of logs prior to 1873. The building was intended as a schoolhouse and as a meeting place for the local Sunday School. After the organization of the church this building was also used as a house of worship until it was burned.

In 1897 the community built a replacement. This also was of log construction with the outside covered over with lumber. In 1927 the class rooms on either side of the sanctuary were built.

On January 26, 1964 the actual construction was begun on the present sanctuary. Mr. Hector McNeill turned the first shovel of dirt.

The building was handled by committees with everyone serving being a dedicated part of the church. Because they were so effective we are naming these committees:

1. Construction Committee:Mr. William A. Shaw, Chairman, Mr. Lauchlin Shaw, Mr. Hector McNeill, Mr. Theodore Smith, Mr. Robert Lasater, Mr. T. K. Spence, Mr. S. P. Stone and Mr. Carlos Wicker.

2. Christian Education Committee: Mr. Edwin Bain, Chairman, Mrs. Charles Smith, Mr. Angus Shaw, and Mr. James Darroch.

3. Fellowship and Recreation Committee: Mr. M. Lynn Burgess, Mr. John Stone, Mrs. Melba Canady, Mrs. Malcolm Shaw, Mr. Billy Wilder and Mrs. Nicolas Wilson.

4. Promotion and Finance Committee: Mr. Johnny Smith, Chairman, Mr. Elton Arnold, Mr. Ken Black, Mrs. Everett Clayton, Mr. Junious Parker, Mrs. Edgar Smith, Mrs. James McArtan, Mr. Robert Bulter, Mrs. J. D. Shaw and Mr. Malpas Temple.

5. Worship and Arts Committee: Mr. Craig Smith, Mr. Charles Bain, Mrs. Junious Parker, Mrs. Angus Shaw, Mrs. F. C. Wilkerson, Mr. Malcolm Shaw and Mrs. Elton Arnold.

6. The Executive Committee: The chairmen of the five existing prime committees and the pastor.

There was a slow down of the original contractors and on their request Mr. Bill Shaw, a local contractor and officer in the church, took over the construction and completed the church in April, 1965.

The consecration service for the sanctuary was held on Sunday, November 2, 1965 with The Reverend Dr. Chevis K. Ligon, Executive Secretary of Fayetteville Presbytery, in the pulpit. The sermon was delivered by

To further add to the social activities of the church, money was provided for material to build tables with Allen Baldwin giving of his time and talent to make them one of which was a long serving table. A table cloth was given for the latter and also a glass punch bowl. The glass service plates having previously been given by Mrs. Martha Belle Shaw and Mrs. Margaret Smith.

During the years the Women of the Church have presented three life memberships honoring three great ladies. We are including those sketches which accompanied the citations.

Sketch of the life of Mrs. Jane McCormick Marsh September 6, 1964:

"Mrs. Eliza Jane McCormick Marsh was born May 23, 1881. She is the daughter of the late Rebecca Shaw Morrison McCormick and Hugh D. McCormick. She has lived in this community all of her life, was baptized in infancy, and has been a member of Flat Branch Presbyterian Church since young girlhood, except for about seven years after her marriage when she moved her membership to Lillington Presbyterian Church.

She was married in 1919 to Mr. John Lewis Marsh. Mr. Marsh passed away June 20, 1939 and since that time she has still kept her home near the church.

She has taught a Sunday School class for many years at Flat Branch Church, and while a member at the Lillington Church also taught a class there. She has served in all positons in the Women of the Church, having been President at least twice, probably more. As early as 1907 she was Vice President.

Mrs. Marsh was a public school teacher for several years, beginning to teach when she was twenty or twenty-one years of age. She first taught at Gourd Springs School, then later at Flat Branch School, Hickory Grove, Round Top, Cambro, Lillington and Cape Fear Schools.

She has been active in community affairs during the years. For a time she worked with the Welfare Department giving canning demonstrations to show how to save home-grown foods to add to the family food supply.

It can be truthfully said that she has lived a long and useful life in the community and church."

The Citation:

"In recognition of many years of faithful service as a Sunday School teacher, her loyalty to the work of the Women of the Church, and her interest in all activities of the church, this honorary Life Membership in

the Women of the Church is presented to Mrs. Jane McCormick Marsh by the Women of Flat Branch Presbyterian Church.

She is to be commended for the fine example she has set in the community."

Sketch of the life of Miss Flora Rebecca McCormick September 6, 1964:

Miss Flora Rebecca McCormick was born May 4, 1884. She is the daughter of the late Rebecca Shaw Morrison McCormick and Hugh D. McCormick. She has been a lifelong resident of this community, was baptized in infancy, and has been a member of Flat Branch Presbyterian Church since girlhood.

She has taught a Sunday School class from time to time for many years and has served in all positions in the Women of the Church. It is recorded in the history that in 1912 she was Secretary.

Miss McCormick taught in public schools for several years. Beginning when quite young, she taught in the Flat Branch School, Round Top, Cambro and Anderson Creek Schools. She always taught the smaller children.

She has been active in community affairs through the years. She worked for a time in the Tax Office in Lillington; also with the office and on the Farm Committee.

In addition to her other commendable accomplishments, she is especially noted for her courtesy to strangers who visited the church.

She has lived a life of service to her church and her community."

The Citation:

"In recognition of many years of faithful service to the Women of the Church, the Sunday School, and all activities of the church, this Honorary Life Membership in the Women of the Church is presented to Miss Flora Rebecca McCormick by the Women of Flat Branch Presbyterian Church.

She is to be commended for the fine example she has set through the years."

Sketch of the life of Mrs. W. B. Lasater:

"Mrs. W. B. Lasater was, before her marriage, Miss Mary Catherine Francis. She was born June 11, 1888 in Bertie County.

She attended Windsor Public Schools until the age of ten years at which time she went to Oxford Orphanage, Oxford, N. C., when she completed her grammar and high school education. After graduation from high

school she entered Oxford Seminary in 1904 and graduated in 1908, majoring in English and French.

In the summer of 1907 she attended King's Business College where she took preliminary work for a business course. During her schooling at King's she visisted in the home of one of her teachers where she met her future husband, William Barrett Lasater, whom she married November 16, 1910. From their marriage they have seven children, five boys and two girls. She joined Broadway Presbyterian Church in December, 1910. Here she taught a womens adult Bible class for eighteen years and young people for one year. In May, 1937 she and the family moved to Harnett County. She attended Flat Branch Church regularly until an accident to Mr. Lasater kept her from attending regularly for awhile, but as he improved she began attending regularly again and soon began to teach the Women's Bible Class which she taught for approximately fourteen years. She also taught high school graduates and college students for a year. Since moving into the new church she has taught both men and women of the church.

She has participated in the work of the Women of the Church and attends meetings regularly.

Through her loyalty to the church and her ernest efforts toward its work she has set a shining example in this community."

The Citation:

"In recognition of many years of faithful service to the Women of the Church, the Sunday School, and all activities of the Church, this Honorary Life Membership in the Women of the Church is presented to Mrs. W. B. Lasater by the Women of Flat Branch Presbyterian Church.

She is to be commended for the fine example she has set through the years."

THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

For many years the men of Flat Branch have had their own organization. It was in November, 1958, that Dr. Marcus Smith of Raeford Presbyterian Church brought the original charter to Flat Branch and presented it to the men. Mr. Floyd Autry was the President at that time.

Consistently the Men of Flat Branch have supported the program of the Presbytery and State wide organizations. Many of the men have attended the annual meetings at Camp Monroe and at Montreat.

THE MUSIC

From the travelling song and music teachers of the latter half of the 1800's to the fine polished Chancel choir, the musical program of Flat Branch has grown and flourished.

The opening of the 1900's brought the congregational sings held in various churches in the community. These all day sings were accompanied by picnics and fellowship. These affairs were held on week days in order to nowise bring dishonor to the Lord's Holy Day.

During the past twenty years the choir and the church has been blessed by the contribution of Janice Smith and Tommy Shaw. These two children of the church, now grown, are talented musicians who have given freely of their accomplishments.

Truly God is praised in the Kirk upon the hill with music and singing.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Flat Branch is a fruitful church for there has always been an abundance of young people. The church early realized the opportunity of serving these young churchmen and has provided a program of fellowship and Christian nurture.

One of the fine traditions is the trick or treat campaign each Halloween for jams and jellies and then the trip to carry these delicious items to Barium Springs for the use of the orphanage.

When Mr. Taylor became pastor of the Bunnlevel and Flat Branch Churches, the young people, both Pioneers and Senior Highs, were combined. Also, when Mr. Bryan came the same plan was used. When Mr. Schulherr came, Mr. Bobby Kennedy was appointed adult advisor and is carrying on the work in a wonderful way at Flat Branch.

The young people have been active in the District and Presbytery work and have attended regularly the meetings.

THOMAS KENDALL SPENCE, JR.

The first of our sons to hear the call to enter the ministry of the church graduated from the local High School and entered Davidson College where he graduated on May 30, 1930. In the fall he entered Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. Three years later he was graduated, ordained and licensed to preach.

Tommy is the son of Nora Smith Spence and the late Thomas Kendall Spence. Truly a well-born son, his father for many years a ruling elder in Flat Branch Church. His grandfather, one of the founding fathers of the church and a pillar of strength in those early years, was Mr. Edgar Smith, Sr.

Tommy is married to the former Brenda Winstead of Jonesboro. God has blessed this union with two sons, Thomas Kendall, III and John Willoughby.

The Spences are now ministering to the Peace Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville.

THINGS AND PLACES WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET

The spring down under the brow of the hill with its cool, clear, bubbling water.

The old wooden sill out in front of the old church protected from the sun by the trees which surrounded it.

The revival when Dr. Mack preached and fifty young people made professions of their faith. And, in later years, the revivals of The Reverend Cortez Cooper and The Reverend John Ropp. How the Holy Spirit really came in abundance!

The homecoming when Bobby Shaw thought Flora Baldwin had forgotten the chicken and pastry and watching him unload his plate for room when he found it.

To hear Bob Shaw and Edwin Bain lead out on the bass notes of "Blessed Assurance" in congregational singing.

The beauty of the Christmas Eve Choral Communion.

The fellowship enjoyed as we took our worship and shared it with the occupants of Mason's Rest Home.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE:

Edwin Bain, Chairman
Fred McArtan
Tommy Shaw
Mrs. Charlie Smith
Mrs. Lowell Smith
Miss Karen Wilder